



ROLE OF MID-DAY-MEAL IN SOCIAL INCLUSION IN NORTH - 24PARGANAS DISTRICT OF WEST BENGAL

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ABSTRACT

This study is an attempt to evaluate the role of Mid-Day-Meal scheme and obstacles to implementing the scheme successfully as the means of school inclusion as well as social inclusion in North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal. The major objectives of this study is to understand the opinions of teachers, students, parents and cook cum helpers about social inclusion by mid-day-meal. For this study data was collected through survey method and used closed ended questionnaire as a tool. Six schools were selected from two blocks of the said district through purposive sampling for the reason that it best suited the researchers' need. The findings of the study reveals that overall performance of this scheme is satisfactory. But there are some obstacles. To increase the enrolment, regular attendance, academic performances and hygienic awareness of students mid-day-meal scheme covers a major role for social Inclusion.

KEY WORD: Social Inclusion, Enrolment, Mid-Day-Meal, Dropouts.

INTRODUCTION:

In present situation mid-day-meal is one of the most widely discussed topic. Literacy rate from the history of independence started at 19% the first census (1951) but today's literacy rate is 74% (census, 2011). Indian's literacy rate is quite less than the developed countries. The main reasons behind that were malnutrition and lack of proper education. An effort to combine health and education simultaneously, government arranging schemes for mid-day-meal in schools. The objectives of providing mid-day-meal were following:

1. To increase student enrollment in the school.
2. To solve the problems of malnutrition.
3. To increase the students daily attendance.

Regarding the above issues the mid-day-meal programme had emerged but the researchers inquire whether mid-day-meal helps in social Inclusion or not.

Mid-day-meal programme was introduced in 15th august 1995 by Govt of India for primary education. In october 2007 the scheme also included the students of upper primary classes. Though earlier uncooked 3 kg of wheat or rice was to be provided to children with 80% attendance. In West Bengal mid-day meal scheme was stated in primary level from the year 2003, but regularly started in upper-primary level from the year 2007-2008. Right to Education Act was enforced in the year 2009. It also helped in school inclusion compulsorily.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

Now Inclusive education is emphasized from the primary level. This Inclusive education requires the social integration at first, because school is a miniature form of society or school is the simplified purified better balanced society. From this research the readers may able to know about the role of mid-day-meal for social inclusion in North 24 Parganas district and teachers, students, cook cum helpers, parents opinions about school mid-day-meal and social affiliation, as well as they can know about the barriers against the social inclusion through mid-day-meal programme. After all, this research may help the further related researches.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To study the effect of mid-day-meal for social inclusion through the student enrollment, total attendance and academic achievement.
2. To determine how much influence of mid-day-meal in social inclusion, based on regularly done students health checkup.
3. To know the perceptions of the teachers and students towards mid-day-meal as a means of social inclusion.
4. To study the perceptions of parents and cooking persons towards the essential role of mid-day-meal for social inclusion.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY:

1. Is social inclusion influenced by students' enrollment, total attendance and academic achievement through the mid-day-meal?
2. Is mid-day-meal help for social inclusion by regularly done students' health

checkup?

3. What are the opinions of teachers about the role of mid-day-meal as a means of social inclusion?
4. What are the opinions of students about the role of mid-day-meal for social inclusion?
5. What are the parents and cooking persons' opinions about the effect of mid-day-meal in social inclusion?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Descriptive survey method employed in the present study. Data also analysed. Sample of the study:

All the high schools of North 24 Parganas district were selected as the population of the study and six high schools from Haroha and Barasat block were selected as the sample of the study.

Tools used:

A questionnaire of 38 close ended questions on role of Mid-day-meal in social inclusion was used for this study. The questionnaire was prepared by the investigator based on experts opinion.

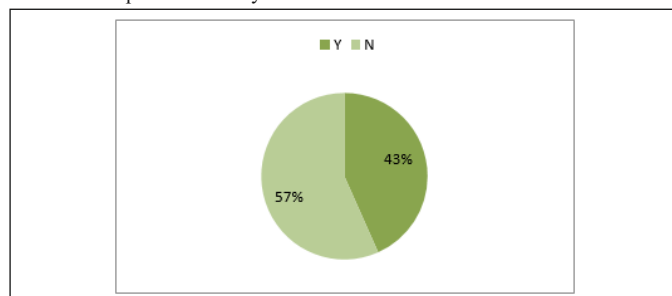
Data collection:

Data was collected from head masters/ mistresses, assistant teachers, students, parents and cooking persons of those schools. Before using questionnaire, the objectives and purpose of this study were discussed with the respondents.

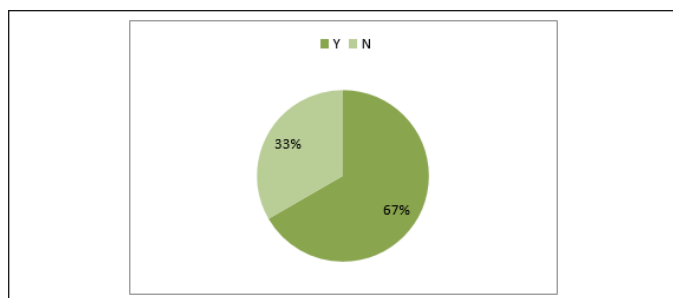
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS:

In this study, the researcher wanted to find out whether the social inclusion is there or not due to mid-day-meal programme in North 24 Parganas district. From the findings of the research, present researcher liked to comment that the mid-day-meal programme is undoubtedly a process of social inclusion. Positive opinions had received from teachers, students, parents and cooking persons in most of the time, although there were some negative attitudes which were the inhibition of social inclusion by mid-day-meal scheme. They are shown in the following data and pie-charts:-

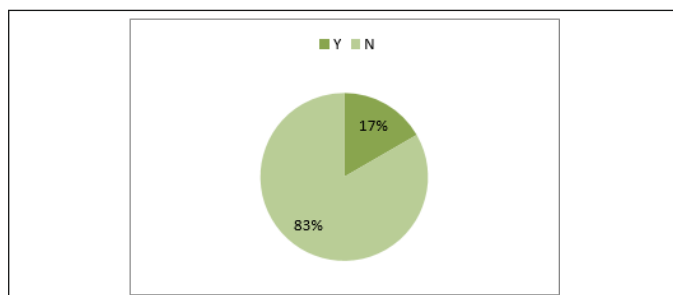
- 57% of teachers said that the students from general caste are not taken meal under the present mid-day-meal scheme.



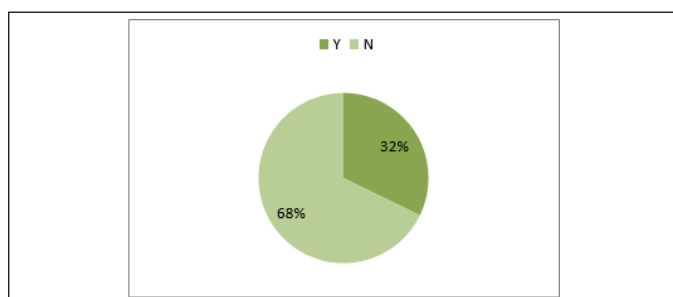
- 33% of headmasters / headmistresses reported that the students are not regularly checked for health.



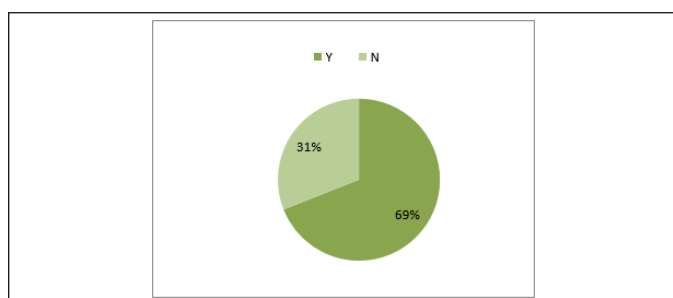
- 17% of students said that they bring plates from their home, although as per provision of mid-day-meal scheme it should be provided by schools.



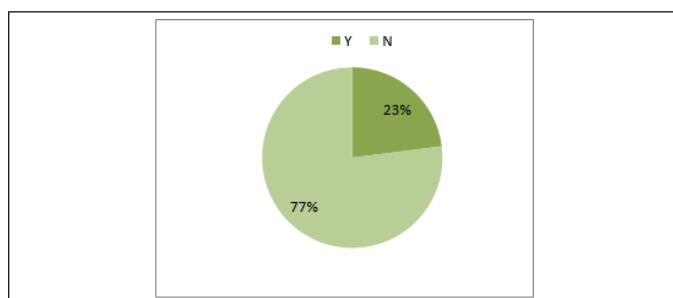
- 32% of students reported that they take mid-day-meal separately from the other students as for caste barriers.



- 31% of student said that they did not take Mid Day Meal everyday.



- 23% Of Parents Said That Lots of Time waste through mid-day-meal in school and it hamper in school education process.



Those are the major obstacles for social inclusion through mid-day-meal programme.

DELIMITATION:

The researcher had restricted the area of research work for saving time and cost. 6

schools were selected for the sample collection and collected data from 15 students of every schools, but the researcher was willing to collect data from 25 students in every 10 schools. Data also collected from 6 head-teachers, 15 teachers, 15 guardians of said students and 12 cook-cum helper of abovementioned high schools of two previously mentioned blocks.

CONCLUSION:

At the end of the study the investigator concluded that social Inclusion is possible in the school of North 24Parganas district by the Mid-Day Meal scheme, but due to the racial discrimination, prejudices and lack of proper attitude towards Mid-Day Meal, there have been some obstacles in this regard. So it requires a clear idea and changing mindset of people about Mid-Day Meal. Only then the maximum kind of social inclusion should possible.

SUGGESTIONS:

- The quality of meals must be increased to attain the goals of mid-day meal scheme and social inclusion in a more effective way.
- For maximum social inclusion the payment of helpers and cooks must be increased so that they could be motivated for their responsibility.
- Many schools did not have plates for eating therefore the children brought bowls or plates or lunch boxes from their houses. It is the major obstacle for social inclusion. As per the provisions of mid-day-meal scheme it should be provided by the schools.
- There should be proper provisions of liquid- petroleum- gas (LPG) for the preparation of food without bad smell in food and also maintained the health and hygiene.

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